



Kingston Conservation Advisory Council
www.kingstoncac.org

2016 Annual Report

General Background

This volunteer board is an advisory body that works to ensure the conservation of Kingston's natural resources and the enhancement and protection of its environment while fostering unified action on environmental matters. The City of Kingston is one of 16 other Ulster County Conservation Councils. The Kingston CAC was created under Resolution 180 of 2008, in November, 2008.

This advisory board, consisting of Kingston residents, advises the Planning Board, Common Council, and Mayor on matters pertaining to the natural environment of the city; conducts public programs to inform the public of local and regional environmental issues; and coordinates with local groups which have an impact on the local environment.

The Kingston Conservation Advisory Council meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm in Kingston City Hall Conference Room 1. The meetings are open to the general public. Since its inception, the CAC has held 91 general council meetings and 12 special meetings, in addition to sub-committee meetings. All meeting minutes and agendas are posted and archived on the Kingston CAC webpage of the City of Kingston website.

2016 Council Members (two year terms):

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Julie Noble, Chair | 1/2/2009-12/31/18 | 5 th term |
| Elizabeth (Betta) Broad | 12/11/14-12/31/16 | 1 st term |
| Lorraine Farina | 1/1/16-12/31/17 | 1 st term |
| Emilie Hauser | 1/1/13-12/31/18 | 3 rd term |
| Lynn Johnson | 2/6/14-12/31/17 | 2 nd term |
| Kevin McEvoy | 8/21/13-12/31/18 | 3 rd term |
| Casey Schwarz | 1/2/11-12/31/18 | 4 th term |

2016 Highlights

1) Natural Resources Inventory

With an ultimate goal of creating an Open Space Plan for Kingston, the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) process continued in 2016.

A large amount of time and work was dedicated to the NRI process in 2016. The most significant to note was the hiring of a Natural Resources Inventory consultant using Hudson River Estuary Program funding acquired by the City specifically for the project. This two year funding stream was used to hire John Mickelson, who worked jointly with the Kingston Parks and Recreation Department under the Supervision of Julie Noble, while working closely with members of the CAC. Interns Matt Akin and Krista Micelli also continued to provide consultation as part of the NRI work. The focus of the work in 2016 was to complete the mapping needed for the Natural Resources Inventory. A sub-committee of the CAC held weekly conference calls to progress the work of the NRI, coupled with monthly full CAC reporting. The scope of the mapping project included gathering existing datasets, digitizing existing relevant non-GIS maps, conducting a windshield tour of Kingston's natural features, and creating GIS maps unique to Kingston. A full list of maps and subsequent data sets can be found in Figure 1.

A further component of the NRI that was begun in 2016 was a Scenic Resources Review, which was conducted by intern Krista Micelli. This review included research into other scenic resource protection plans and projects done by others throughout NYS and a look at best practices to garner ideas for how Kingston can accomplish something similar locally.

In the summer of 2016, the City of Kingston also applied for a Hudson River Estuary Program grant, under their Grants for Local Stewardship Planning Round 18. The grant: Open Space Inventory for City of Kingston, was successful and has a timeline of November 1, 2016 – October 31, 2018. The grant will provide the city the means to hire a consultant to complete an Open Space Plan. At the end of 2016, the Scope of Work and RFP for this position were being drafted. The Kingston CAC has been closely involved and will continue to closely be involved in this grant process.

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Figure 1. City of Kingston Map Array

2) Wood Burning/Air Quality

In 2016, the Kingston CAC began a focused look into air quality concerns, particularly with a focus on localized residential wood burning in Kingston. A subcommittee of the CAC met several times with City staff from the Kingston Fire Department, Building Safety, City Corporation Counsel's Office and Economic Development Office to fully understand the scope of the issue as well as Kingston's existing legislation, enforcement and education on the issue. The sub-committee also did extensive research on how other municipalities nationwide address the issue, consulting with experts in the field. An informational brochure was developed and distributed via the Fire Department on the dangers of wood smoke. At the close of 2016, further educational messages were being developed and grant funding was being sought to pay for monitoring equipment.

3) Climate Adaptive Design Studio (CAD)

CAD is a studio research effort using design to inspire climate adaptation, in partnership with Cornell University Landscape Architecture, Cornell Water Resources Institute, and the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program. The Climate-Adaptive Design (CAD) Studio links Cornell Landscape Architecture students with Hudson Riverfront communities, like Kingston, faced with flooding and sea-level rise to explore design alternatives for more climate resilient, beautiful and connected waterfront areas. Students work with community stakeholders, non-profit partners, and technical experts in an interdisciplinary process of waterfront design. The project culminates with an open house to share student ideas with the community. CAD designs show the community options for development and revitalization that also deal with expected sea-level rise and flooding. Kingston CAC members participated in a full semester of CAD as Kingston was the focus of the CAD Studio for the fall of 2016. With a focus on Island Dock and Block Park, CAC members served as a resource, for insight, input and expertise in waterfront, environmental, historical, economic and social issues in Kingston.

4) Tidal Waterfront Flooding Task Force

The Kingston Waterfront Flooding Task Force was appointed by Mayor Shayne Gallo in the fall of 2012, and was charged with evaluating the present and future vulnerability to flooding, storm surge and sea-level rise along the Rondout-Hudson waterfront. This group was asked to recommend strategies for a resilient waterfront and convened from December 2012 through August 2013. The group produced a final report [Planning for Rising Waters: Final Report of the City of Kingston Tidal Waterfront Flooding Taskforce](#) but the Task Force culminated with the production of the report. The Kingston CAC has continued to play a role in continuing the efforts of this Task Force. In 2016, CAC members participated in the following professional development opportunities pertaining to the waterfront:

- a) Sea Level Rise Implementation Learning Group (Kingston, Piermont, Catskill, Stony Point) meeting on November 10, 2016.

5) Planning Board and Department Review

Kingston CAC members regularly attend the Kingston Planning Board monthly meetings to stay abreast of local proposals and items of interest in Kingston. Additionally, beginning in the Fall of 2012, the Kingston CAC began the informal process of general reviews of proposed developments that came before the Kingston Planning Board. This process includes a general review of each new proposal or action that comes before the Planning Board, for environmental impact. The scope of review has included concerns such as storm water runoff, habitat conservation, open space preservation, walkability and bikeability, and in-fill development. Concerns and recommendations are submitted to the Planning Department, for review by the Planning Board, in advance of the Planning Board meeting and a CAC member attends each Planning Board meeting to be available for further comments or questions.

In 2016, several site proposals were reviewed by the CAC including:

- a) Irish Cultural Center of the Hudson Valley (#32 Abeel Street)
- b) Health Alliance Mary's Avenue Site Plan
- c) Alms House/Landmark Place (#300 Flatbush Avenue)
- d) Kingston Meadows Senior Residence
- e) Smorgasburg (#200 North Street)

6) Letters of Support for Municipal Initiatives

The Kingston CAC values the work of the municipal staff in regards to relevant environmental issues and often provides letters of support to municipal applications for funding directed toward environmental initiatives. There were no formal letters of support submitted by the Kingston CAC in 2016.

7) Environmental Reviews

Frequently, the Kingston CAC will receive formal requests from either a community member, city staff, the legislative body or the executive body to review, research or weigh in on local environmental issues. The CAC then independently decides what action to take on each proposal. In 2016, the Kingston CAC participated in the following reviews:

- a) Zoning Code Update Review
- b) Hudson River Barge Anchorage Review, Resolution Development and Recommendation to the Common Council
- c) City of Kingston Sidewalk Code Review, Task Force Participation, Ongoing input

- d) NYSDEC's proposed 6 NYCRR Part 490, Project Sea Level Rise- Comments Submitted to NYS DEC
- e) NYSDEC's Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy (Commissioner Policy-29) as pertains to proposed Pilgrim Pipeline- Collaboration with Riverkeeper, Resolution Development, Recommendation to Common Council
- f) City of Kingston Recycling and Code Enforcement – Review

8) Outreach/Engagement

It is very important to the Kingston CAC to maintain a transparent and open relationship with the citizens of Kingston regarding environmental happenings in Kingston. All meeting minutes and agendas are posted in a timely manner on the City of Kingston website's CAC page, as are pertinent documents that the CAC has adopted, resource links and tools used for projects and initiatives.

Additionally, a member of the Kingston CAC attends each Public Safety/General Government/Auditing Committee meeting of the Common Council in order to keep the city government abreast of Kingston CAC initiatives as well as to maintain an open line of communication with decision makers.

9) Special Guests/Presentations

The Kingston CAC often hosts organizations or individuals to monthly meetings for relevant topic based presentations. These may either be pertinent to ongoing CAC initiatives or for strictly informational. In 2016, the Kingston CAC hosted the following special presentations or guests:

- a) Mayor Steve Noble, Meet and Greet
- b) Kate Hudson, Riverkeeper, Pilgrim Pipeline and Kingston's review
- c) Joseph Safford and Tom Tiano, Kingston Fire Department Building Safety Division, Wood Burning and Air Quality
- d) John Mickelson, Krista Micelli, and Matt Akin, NRI Consultants and Interns, NRI project
- e) Joint meeting with the Tree Commission and Planning Board

9) Professional Development

Kingston CAC members regularly attend meetings, workshops and conferences to further their professional development and to keep up to date on currently, relevant environmental issues regionally and locally. In 2016, CAC council members participated in:

- a) Bard Center for Environmental Policy Masters Program Peer Review
- b) Climate Smart Communities Certification Forum
- c) Community Choice Aggregation Webinar
- d) Hudson River Watershed Alliance Source Water Workshop

- e) Community Rating System Forum
- f) Clean Energy Communities Forum
- g) Solar Interconnection Workshop

10) Organizational Liaisons/Appointees

Kingston CAC council members hold positions on local environmentally related boards, and regularly acted as liaisons to:

- a) Ulster County Environmental Management Council
- b) Kingston Land Trust Rail Trail Committee and Land Use Committee
- c) Climate Smart Kingston Commission
- d) Friends of Forsyth Nature Center
- e) NYS Association of Conservation Commissions
- f) American Solar Energy Society
- g) Public Safety/General Government/Auditing Committee liaison
- h) Kingston Planning Board liaison
- i) Ulster County Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission
- j) Mid-Hudson Clean Power Project Working Group
- k) Climate Smart Library Advisory Committee
- l) Waterfront Advisory Council
- m) Heritage Area Commission
- n) Friends of Historic Kingston
- o) Kingston Urban Agriculture Committee
- p) Hudson River Environmental Society
- q) Ulster County Human Rights Commission
- r) Kingston's Sidewalk Task Force